

Participation of Mothers in Government Assistance Programs: 2001

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Household Economic Studies

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INTRODUCTION

This report focuses on the fertility and socioeconomic characteristics of mothers in 2001 related to participation in six public assistance programs: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); food stamps; the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); Medicaid; housing assistance; and other programs, which include general assistance and other types of welfare (see the Program Coverage description box on the following page). It expands the scope of the previous report, based on 1996 data, by including information on mothers' participation in housing and other assistance programs.¹ The report also focuses more closely on mothers aged 15 to 44 with a birth in the last year, as the needs of mothers with infants may differ from those of mothers with older children.

The data come from Wave 2 of the 2001 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), which was conducted from June through September 2001. This report provides the first look at the participation of mothers in these programs since the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) was enacted. The PRWORA gave states greater flexibility to formulate and implement initiatives to reduce welfare dependency and encourage employment for members of low-income families with children.²

¹ Jane L. Dye, *Fertility and Program Participation in the United States: 1996*. Household Economic Studies, P70-82. U.S. Census Bureau: Washington, DC, 2002.

² U.S. Congress, Public Law 104-193. H.R. 3734, 1996.

The SIPP data represent program participation at one point in time. They do not represent annual caseloads or the total number of people who may have participated in these programs at any time during the year.³

MOTHERS' PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMS

In 2001, 9.7 million women 15 to 44 years old, or 16 percent of all women of childbearing age, were participants in or covered by at least 1 of the 6 public assistance programs highlighted in this report (Table 1).⁴ Sixty-seven percent (6.5 million) of the participants in these programs were mothers; 12 percent of the participants (1.2 million mothers) had a birth in the last year. The program with

³ The data in this report were collected from June through September 2001 in the second wave (interview) of the 2001 Survey of Income and Program Participation. The population represented (the population universe) is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in the United States. Differences may be noted between estimates of program participation shown in this report and estimates presented in reports from agencies that administer these programs. In addition to different universe definitions (this analysis includes only mothers 15 to 44 years old), the SIPP data are based on participation at one point in time rather than total participation in a calendar year. Administrative data may include people multiple times as they enroll, leave, and re-enroll in a program over the course of a year. In addition to these differences, reports of program participation may be affected by different names of programs in different states and by inaccuracies or omissions made by the household respondent for other members of the household in the survey.

⁴ The estimates in this report (which may be shown in text, figures, and tables) are based on responses from a sample of the population and may differ from actual values because of sampling variability or other factors. As a result, apparent differences between the estimates for two or more groups may not be statistically significant. All comparative statements have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless otherwise noted.

Current Population Reports

By
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PROGRAM COVERAGE

The following descriptions explain federal and state programs as they existed at the time SIPP data were collected in 2001.^a Participation in programs is defined to include women who were enrolled or covered in the programs and living in households receiving housing assistance.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

TANF benefits are tied to economic requirements that most adult recipients work as soon as “job ready” or no later than 2 years after assistance begins.^b TANF defines work as labor force participation, such as looking for employment or being employed. Work may also be defined as work-related activities, such as community service, schooling, vocational training, general skill development, or other types of training. Eligibility may vary by state, but generally eligibility for TANF depends upon income, assets, and the presence of a dependent child under age 18 (or an older age if the child is enrolled full-time in high school or an equivalency program). The child must be deprived of financial support or care because a parent died, left home, is physically or mentally incapacitated, or is unemployed or underemployed. Applicants must be residents of the state making the payments and a U.S. citizen or an eligible, qualified alien. In fiscal year 2002, 1.3 million adults received TANF, of whom about 85 percent (1.1 million) were women

^a More detailed information on the eligibility requirements for these programs can be found in the U.S. House of Representatives' 2000 *Green Book: Background Material and Data on Programs Within the Jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means: WMCP 106-14, 2000*.

^b Administration for Children and Families, ACF News, Fact Sheets, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), <www.acf.hhs.gov/news/facts/tanf.html>, May 5, 2004.

15 to 49 years
<www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/tanfindex.htm>.

Food Stamps

The Food Stamp Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, provides low-income households with access to a “nutritionally adequate low-cost diet.” The value of food stamps received by eligible households is based on the requirement that households contribute about 30 percent of their income to the purchase of food. In 2001, people who were eligible for TANF were, in general, automatically eligible for food stamps, although not all TANF participants received food stamps. In fiscal year 2002, 8.2 million households participated in the Food Stamp Program <www.fns.usda.gov/pd/fsfyhh.htm>.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

WIC provides nutritional assistance to low-income pregnant and postpartum women, their infants, and their other children under 5 years of age. To be eligible, a recipient's income must fall at or below 185 percent of the U.S. Poverty Income Guidelines (\$27,065 for a family of three in 2001) and the recipient must have been nutritionally at risk. Benefits include checks or vouchers to purchase specific food items, nutrition education and counseling, and breastfeeding support. In fiscal year 2002, 1.8 million women participated in the WIC program <www.fns.usda.gov/pd/WIC_Monthly.htm>.

Medicaid

Medicaid provides access to health care for low-income families, the

aged, the disabled, the medically needy, and the poor. Unlike its predecessor program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), TANF eligibility does not automatically confer Medicaid eligibility on families. Medicaid covered pregnant women and children under age 6 with family incomes up to 133 percent of the poverty level (\$19,458 for a family of three in 2001). States had the option of covering pregnant women and infants with family incomes up to 185 percent of the poverty level. In fiscal year 2002, 9.8 million adults were enrolled in Medicaid <www.cms.hhs.gov/researchers/pubs/datacompendium/current>.

Housing Assistance

Housing assistance reduces housing costs and improves housing quality for low-income households. Participants may live in public housing developments or receive subsidies for rent outside of public housing. Eligibility is based on income limits developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and varies from area to area. U.S. citizenship or eligible immigration status is also required.

General Assistance or Other Welfare

General assistance (or general relief) usually covers those not covered by TANF or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). SSI usually assists the elderly and severely disabled and is not covered in this report. Not all states offer general assistance. Benefits to families with children or to pregnant women in their first two trimesters may be administered under general assistance or TANF. “Other welfare” in this report describes any type of state or county welfare programs not accounted for under TANF or general assistance.

Table 1.
Fertility and Program Participation Status for Women 15 to 44 Years: 2001

Program participation status	Total women		Women with at least one child ever born			Women with no children ever born
	Number	Margin of error ¹	Total	Mothers who had a child in the last year	Mothers who did not have a child in the last year	
NUMBER (thousands)						
Total²	61,315	577	35,240	4,066	31,174	26,075
Participants ³	9,688	323	6,527	1,194	5,334	3,161
TANF	960	106	748	171	577	213
Food stamps	4,458	225	3,501	559	2,941	957
WIC	1,134	115	898	449	449	235
Medicaid	6,669	272	4,252	767	3,484	2,418
Housing assistance	2,911	183	2,073	239	1,834	838
Other ⁴	263	56	198	44	154	65
Nonparticipants ⁵	51,627	577	28,713	2,872	25,841	22,914
PERCENT BY PROGRAM PARTICIPATION STATUS						
Total²	100.0	(X)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Participants ³	15.8	0.5	18.5	29.4	17.1	12.1
TANF	1.6	0.2	2.1	4.2	1.9	0.8
Food stamps	7.3	0.4	9.9	13.8	9.4	3.7
WIC	1.8	0.2	2.5	11.0	1.4	0.9
Medicaid	10.9	0.4	12.1	18.9	11.2	9.3
Housing assistance	4.7	0.3	5.9	5.9	5.9	3.2
Other ⁴	0.4	0.1	0.6	1.1	0.5	0.2
Nonparticipants ⁵	84.2	0.5	81.5	70.6	82.9	87.9
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY FERTILITY STATUS						
Total²	100.0	(X)	57.5	6.6	50.8	42.5
Participants ³	100.0	(X)	67.4	12.3	55.1	32.6
TANF	100.0	(X)	77.9	17.8	60.1	22.1
Food stamps	100.0	(X)	78.5	12.6	66.0	21.5
WIC	100.0	(X)	79.2	39.6	39.6	20.8
Medicaid	100.0	(X)	63.7	11.5	52.2	36.3
Housing assistance	100.0	(X)	71.2	8.2	63.0	28.8
Other ⁴	100.0	(X)	75.4	16.8	58.7	24.6
Nonparticipants ⁵	100.0	(X)	55.6	5.6	50.1	44.4

(X) Not applicable.

¹ This figure added to or subtracted from the estimate provides the 90-percent confidence interval.

² Sum of individual programs may exceed the total because of participation in more than one program.

³ Currently participating or covered by one or more programs.

⁴ Includes general assistance and other welfare.

⁵ Not currently participating in any program.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Wave 2, 2001.

the highest participation rate among women aged 15 to 44, regardless of motherhood, was Medicaid. Among the 51.6 million nonparticipants (women who were not participating in any program), 56 percent were mothers and 6 percent had a birth in the last year.

For the 4.1 million mothers with a birth in the last year, 29 percent were program participants, compared with 17 percent of mothers who did not have a birth in the last year and

12 percent of childless women.⁵ Fourteen percent of mothers with infants received food stamps, as did 9 percent of mothers without recent births. Four percent of women aged 15 to 44 with no children ever born received food stamps.

Among all women 15 to 44 years old who were program participants,

⁵ Data from this survey show that 99 percent of all women with a birth in the last year, both program participants and nonparticipants, had their child living with them.

WIC recipients were most likely to have had a child in the last year (40 percent). Program participants who were least likely to have had a child born in the last year were those receiving housing assistance (8 percent).⁶

⁶ Childless pregnant women may also receive WIC benefits. The SIPP does not collect information on the pregnancy status of respondents; so WIC participants who are pregnant but childless are excluded from this analysis except as shown in Table 1. There may also be other reasons why women without children receive WIC benefits, such as having custody of a child they did not give birth to.

Participation in one program could overlap with participation in other programs. Figure 1 shows that, for mothers with a birth in the last year, 15 percent participated in one public assistance program. The proportion receiving assistance from two programs was 7 percent, and an additional 7 percent were enrolled in three to five programs.⁷ Mothers without recent births had lower participation rates: 9 percent participated in one public assistance program, 4 percent participated in two programs, and 4 percent participated in three to five programs.

Seventy-two percent of all mothers participating in two or more programs were receiving both food stamps and Medicaid.

MARITAL STATUS AND PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Historically, unmarried mothers have been at a greater risk of living in poverty than married mothers.⁸ In addition to being unmarried and not having a spouse's income to include in their overall family income, unmarried mothers are typically younger and hence may have less education and fewer labor force skills.

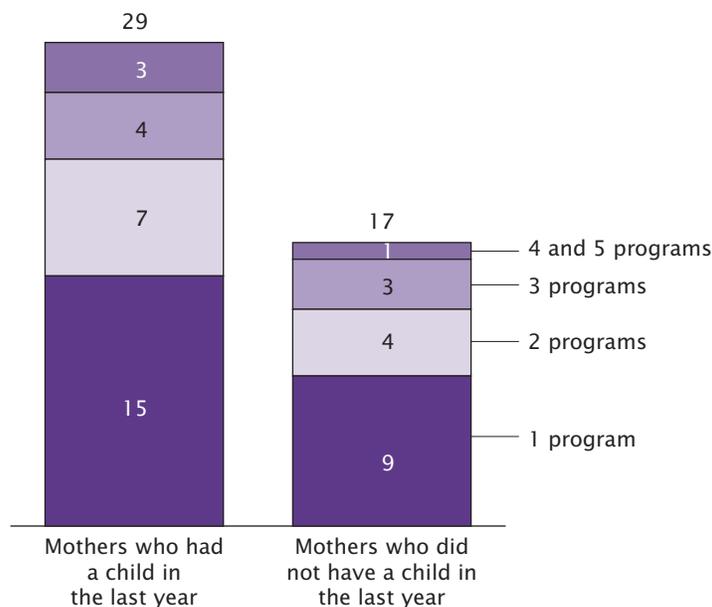
Figure 2 shows program participation rates by age for mothers with and without a recent birth. For both groups, steady declines in program participation occurred between ages 15 to 19 and 30 to

⁷ The proportion receiving assistance from two programs (7 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion enrolled in three to five programs (7 percent).

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, "Historical Tables (Table 4) Poverty Status of Families, by Type of Family, Presence of Related Children, Race and Hispanic Origin: 1959 to 2002," updated October 6, 2003, <www.census.gov/hhes/poverty/histpov/hstspov4.html>.

Figure 1.
Mothers by Participation in Public Assistance Programs: 2001

(Percent of mothers. Mothers are defined as women 15 to 44 who have had one or more births)



Note: The public assistance programs included are TANF, food stamps, WIC, Medicaid, housing assistance, and other (which includes general assistance and other welfare). No mothers participated in all six programs.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Wave 2, 2001.

34.⁹ Figure 2 shows also that the majority of participants with recent births at younger ages were unmarried. Beginning at age 25, mothers with a birth in the last year who were program participants were just as or slightly more likely to be married than unmarried. Among mothers who did not have recent births, and who may have had their children some years

⁹ Program participation rates between mothers with a birth in the last year and mothers without a birth in the last year were not statistically different for the following age groups: 15 to 19, 25 to 29, 30 to 34, and 40 to 44. For both married and unmarried mothers, there were no statistical differences between mothers with a birth in the last year and mothers without a birth in the last year for the age groups 15 to 19 and 40 to 44.

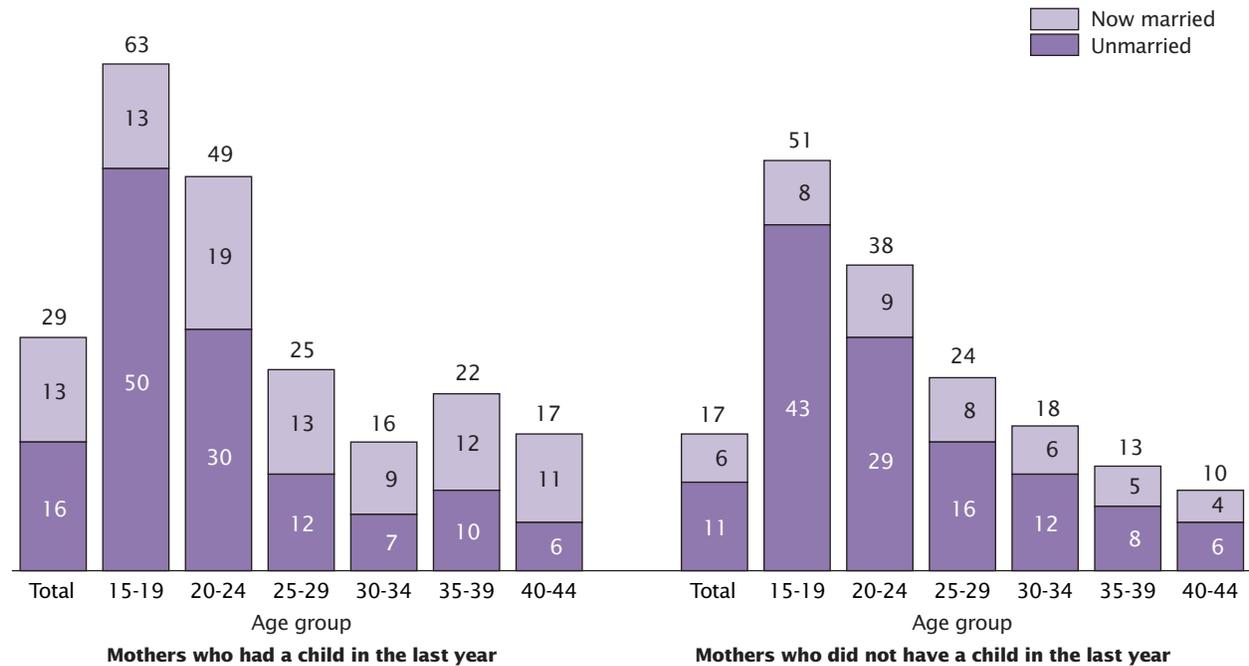
before and been subsequently divorced, unmarried women appeared to make up more than half of all participants through ages 40 to 44.

Among mothers who had a birth in the last year, Table 2 indicates that unmarried mothers were about 3 times as likely to be program participants (57 percent) as married mothers (18 percent). Among mothers who did not have a birth in the last year, the participation rate was also higher for unmarried (34 percent) than married (8 percent) mothers.

The majority of program participants among women with a recent

Figure 2.
Program Participation Rates by Age: 2001

(Percent participating in programs)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Wave 2, 2001.

birth were unmarried with the exception of women enrolled in WIC or receiving other forms of general welfare assistance. Among mothers without a recent birth, unmarried participants outnumbered married program participants for all of the programs shown in Table 2 except for WIC, even though overall there were twice as many married as unmarried mothers (20.7 million and 10.5 million, respectively).¹⁰

The 2001 SIPP data on program participation and fertility are the first to become available since the passage of the 1996 PRWORA. Program participation rates since 1996 fell from 42 percent to

¹⁰ Comparisons between women with recent births and women without recent births were not statistically significant for any program regardless of marital status, except between unmarried mothers (with and without recent births) receiving housing assistance.

29 percent for mothers with a recent birth and from 22 percent to 17 percent for mothers without a recent birth. For both groups of mothers, participation rates fell for both married and unmarried mothers and for mothers 15 to 24 years old and 25 to 34 years old.¹¹

MARITAL STATUS AND LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Regardless of whether a mother had a birth in the last year, mothers participating in programs were less

¹¹ In 2001, the participation rates for married women with children born in the last year were not significantly different between women 25 to 34 years and 35 to 44 years. The participation rates for married women 25 to 34 years were not significantly different for those with recent births versus those without a birth in the last year. The participation rate for married women 35 to 44 years was not significantly different between 1996 and 2001. The participation rate for unmarried women with a birth in the last year was not significantly different for those 15 to 24 years versus 25 to 34 years.

likely than nonparticipating mothers to be living with their spouse (Table 3 and Figure 3). Among mothers with a recent birth, 40 percent of program participants were living with their spouse, compared with 82 percent of nonprogram participants. For mothers without a recent birth, the percentage living with their spouse was lower for both groups: 30 percent and 72 percent, respectively. Higher proportions of program participants had never been married; about 4 out of 10 program participants, regardless of how recently they had had a birth, had never been married, compared with 1 out of 10 nonprogram participants.

Among women with a recent birth who were program participants, 80 percent lived with another adult in the household, compared with 62 percent of mothers without a recent birth. The presence of adult

Table 2.

Program Participation Status of Mothers 15 to 44 Years With a Birth in the Last Year by Marital Status and Age: 1996 and 2001

(Numbers in thousands)

Marital status and age of mother	Total		Participants ²								Nonparticipants ⁴		1996 ⁵	
	Number	Participation rate ¹	Total		TANF	Food stamps	WIC	Medicaid	Housing assistance	Other ³	Number	Percent	Number	Participation rate ¹
			Number	Percent										
Mothers who had a child in the last year	4,066	29.4	1,194	100.0	171	559	449	767	239	44	2,872	100.0	3,859	41.5
NOW MARRIED⁶														
Total	2,899	18.2	526	44.1	50	166	248	251	80	21	2,373	82.6	2,730	27.7
15 to 24 years	493	41.7	206	17.2	24	56	100	110	19	12	287	10.0	586	55.4
25 to 34 years	1,840	12.9	237	19.9	21	83	111	102	52	3	1,603	55.8	1,634	21.7
35 to 44 years	567	14.8	84	7.0	5	27	37	39	9	6	483	16.8	510	15.2
UNMARRIED⁷														
Total	1,167	57.2	667	55.9	121	394	201	516	159	23	499	17.4	1,129	74.7
15 to 24 years	670	59.8	400	33.5	68	225	112	310	103	13	269	9.4	672	80.9
25 to 34 years	365	56.0	205	17.1	54	134	73	165	42	5	161	5.6	356	68.0
35 to 44 years	132	(B)	62	5.2	-	35	17	41	14	5	69	2.4	101	(B)
Mothers who did not have a child in the last year	31,174	17.1	5,334	100.0	577	2,941	449	3,484	1,834	154	25,841	100.0	31,633	21.7
NOW MARRIED⁶														
Total	20,675	8.4	1,747	32.8	110	808	201	1,011	414	42	18,929	73.3	21,760	11.5
15 to 24 years	1,049	24.3	255	4.8	14	119	46	144	61	3	794	3.1	1,119	34.4
25 to 34 years	6,833	10.7	729	13.7	42	332	101	416	191	7	6,105	23.6	8,061	14.7
35 to 44 years	12,793	6.0	763	14.3	54	357	54	451	162	32	12,030	46.6	12,581	7.5
UNMARRIED⁷														
Total	10,499	34.2	3,587	67.2	467	2,133	248	2,473	1,421	112	6,912	26.7	9,873	44.2
15 to 24 years	1,758	48.6	854	16.0	134	422	131	626	324	25	904	3.5	1,592	63.5
25 to 34 years	3,724	37.9	1,411	26.4	212	919	92	982	551	33	2,314	9.0	3,609	50.1
35 to 44 years	5,017	26.4	1,322	24.8	121	792	25	865	546	55	3,695	14.3	4,672	33.1

- Represents or rounds to zero. (B) Derived measure not shown when base is less than 200,000.

¹ Percent of mothers currently participating or covered by one or more programs.² Currently participating in or covered by one or more programs.³ Includes general assistance and other welfare.⁴ Not currently participating in any program.⁵ Data for 1996 may vary from P70-82, *Fertility and Program Participation in the United States: 1996* due to analysis of additional assistance programs.⁶ Includes married spouse present, married spouse absent (excluding separated).⁷ Includes separated, divorced, widowed, and never married.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Wave 2, 2001.

relatives may indicate additional support for, or strain on, family resources. For example, some households may include a grandparent who helps the parent by providing financial or in-kind support, such as child care, while in other households, the grandparent may require additional resources and care because of old age or

disability.¹² Nearly one-quarter (23 percent) of recent mothers receiving benefits and 21 percent

¹² Ken Bryson and Lynne M. Casper, *Coresident Grandparents and Grandchildren*, Current Population Reports, P23-198, <www.census.gov/prod/99pubs/p23-198.pdf> (U.S. Census Bureau: Washington, DC, 1999; Table 1. Characteristics of Grandparents Who Are Coresident With Grandchildren: 1997; and related text).

of participant mothers without a birth in the last year were living with adult relatives other than their spouse.¹³ About 9 percent of non-participant mothers either with or

¹³ The difference between 23 percent of recent mothers receiving benefits and 21 percent of mothers without a birth in the last year living with adult relatives other than their spouse was not statistically significant.

Table 3.
Mothers 15 to 44 Years by Program Participation Status, Age, and Family Characteristics: 2001

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Mothers who had a child in the last year						Mothers who did not have a child in the last year					
	Total		Participants ²		Nonpartici- pants ³		Total		Participants ²		Nonpartici- pants ³	
	Num- ber	Partici- pation rate ¹	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Partici- pation rate ¹	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent
Total.....	4,066	29.4	1,194	100.0	2,872	100.0	31,174	17.1	5,334	100.0	25,841	100.0
Age												
15 to 19 years	276	62.9	174	14.6	102	3.6	345	51.4	177	3.3	168	0.6
20 to 24 years	886	48.8	432	36.2	454	15.8	2,462	37.9	932	17.5	1,530	5.9
25 to 29 years	1,014	24.8	251	21.1	763	26.6	4,250	23.8	1,011	18.9	3,239	12.5
30 to 34 years	1,191	16.0	190	15.9	1,001	34.8	6,308	17.9	1,129	21.2	5,179	20.0
35 to 39 years	515	22.3	115	9.6	400	13.9	8,468	13.1	1,109	20.8	7,359	28.5
40 to 44 years	183	(B)	31	2.6	152	5.3	9,342	10.4	976	18.3	8,366	32.4
Marital Status												
Now married	2,899	18.2	526	44.1	2,373	82.6	20,675	8.4	1,747	32.8	18,929	73.3
Married, husband present	2,833	16.8	476	39.9	2,357	82.1	20,288	8.0	1,614	30.3	18,675	72.3
Married, husband absent ⁴	66	(B)	51	4.2	16	0.5	387	34.4	133	2.5	254	1.0
Separated	120	(B)	72	6.0	48	1.7	1,486	34.4	511	9.6	975	3.8
Divorced	168	(B)	77	6.5	91	3.2	3,914	22.9	898	16.8	3,016	11.7
Widowed	13	(B)	3	0.2	11	0.4	310	25.4	79	1.5	231	0.9
Never married	865	59.6	516	43.2	349	12.2	4,789	43.8	2,099	39.4	2,689	10.4
Living Arrangements												
No other person 18 years and over present	332	72.1	240	20.1	93	3.2	5,055	40.3	2,036	38.2	3,019	11.7
Other adult present ⁵	3,733	25.6	954	79.9	2,779	96.8	26,119	12.6	3,298	61.8	22,821	88.3
Living with spouse	2,833	16.8	476	39.9	2,357	82.1	20,288	8.0	1,614	30.3	18,675	72.3
Living with other adult relative(s) ⁶	505	55.4	280	23.4	225	7.8	3,421	32.0	1,093	20.5	2,327	9.0
Living with an unmarried partner	336	55.5	186	15.6	150	5.2	2,062	25.6	527	9.9	1,534	5.9
Living with other adult nonrelative(s) ⁷	139	(B)	54	4.5	85	3.0	805	24.1	194	3.6	611	2.4

(B) Derived measure not shown when base is less than 200,000.

¹ Percent of mothers currently participating in or covered by one or more programs.

² Currently participating in or covered by one or more programs.

³ Not currently participating in any program.

⁴ Includes women whose spouse is absent other than due to marital separation.

⁵ Categories under "Other adult present" are not mutually exclusive.

⁶ Excludes spouse.

⁷ Excludes unmarried partner.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Wave 2, 2001.

without a birth in the last year lived with other adult relatives.

In 2001, a total of 2.4 million mothers lived with an unmarried partner: 336,000 mothers with a recent birth and 2.1 million mothers without a recent birth (Table 3). Sixteen percent of participant mothers with recent births were cohabiting, compared with 10 percent of participant mothers without a birth in the last year. The least common living arrangement for mothers who were program participants was living with an adult nonrelative who was not a cohabiting partner.

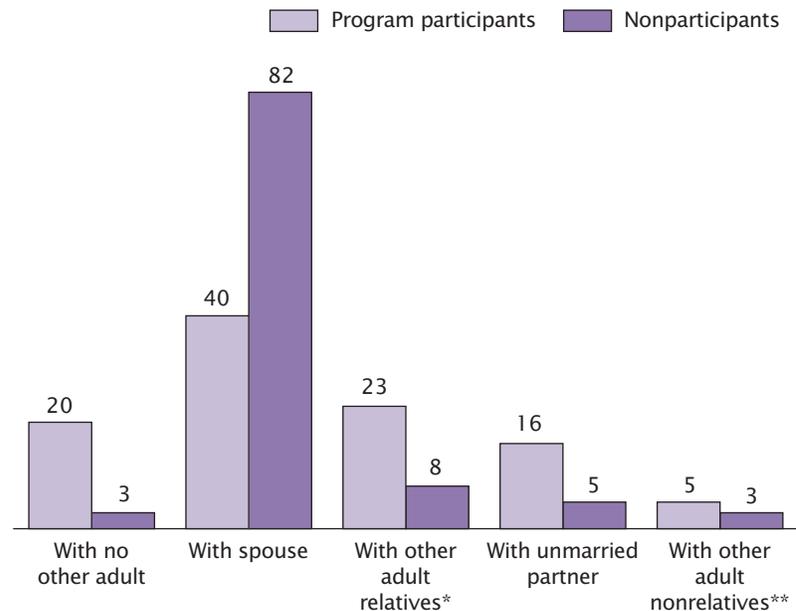
TEENAGERS AND PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Congress identified teenage childbearing as both a considerable social issue and a factor associated with long-term receipt of public assistance.¹⁴ Having a child as a teenager may interrupt a young woman's education and put her at risk of economic hardship. In addition, early childbearing can lead to higher levels of lifetime fertility, and larger families may have increased financial burdens and increased likelihood of receiving public assistance. Of the estimated 621,000 teenage mothers in 2001, 351,000 (57 percent) were enrolled in one or more of the public assistance programs examined in this report (Table 3). For teen mothers with a birth in the last year, 63 percent were receiving benefits, as were one-half (51 percent) of teen mothers without a recent birth (a difference that is not statistically significant). Teen mothers made up 15 percent of

¹⁴ U.S. Congress, Public Law 104-193, H.R. 3734, 1996. Title 1—"Block Grants for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families." Section 101, Findings.

Figure 3.
Living Arrangements of Mothers Who Had a Child in the Last Year by Program Participation: 2001

(Percent in living arrangement)



*Excluding spouses.

**Excluding cohabiting partners.

Note: Percentages may sum to more than 100 percent because more than one type of adult may live in a household.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Wave 2, 2001.

participants with a birth in the last year, compared with 3 percent of participants without a recent birth. Mothers with recent births are generally younger; 29 percent of the 4.1 million mothers with a birth in the last year were 15 to 24 years old, compared with 9 percent of the 31.2 million mothers without a recent birth.¹⁵

RACE, HISPANIC ORIGIN, AND NATIVITY

Race and Hispanic origin

Program participation rates among mothers in 2001 differed by race

¹⁵ The percentage of mothers 15 to 19 years without a birth in the last year who participated was not statistically different from the percentage of mothers 15 to 19 years without a recent birth who did not participate.

and Hispanic origin (Table 4).¹⁶ Among Black mothers with infants, 56 percent were program participants. Among non-Hispanic White mothers with infants and their Asian and Pacific Islander counterparts, the rate was 21 percent each. Hispanic mothers with infants recorded an intermediate participation rate (43 percent). Participation rates were lower for

¹⁶ Hispanics may be any race. Based on the population of mothers aged 15 to 44 in Wave 2 of the 2001 SIPP Panel, 14.9 percent of the White population and 4.5 percent of the Black population were also Hispanic. Data for the American Indian and Alaska Native population are not shown in this report because of the small sample size in the SIPP. In 2001, Asian and Pacific Islanders were counted as one racial category. Beginning in 2004, the SIPP has the same racial categories as used in the Current Population Survey, the American Community Survey, and Census 2000.

Table 4.
**Mothers 15 to 44 Years by Program Participation Status and Selected Characteristics:
 2001**

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Mothers who had a child in the last year						Mothers who did not have a child in the last year					
	Total		Participants ²		Nonparticipants ³		Total		Participants ²		Nonparticipants ³	
	Number	Participation rate ¹	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Participation rate ¹	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Total	4,066	29.4	1,194	100.0	2,872	100.0	31,174	17.1	5,334	100.0	25,841	100.0
Race and Hispanic Origin												
White	3,274	25.1	823	68.9	2,451	85.3	24,318	13.6	3,307	62.0	21,011	81.3
Non-Hispanic	2,617	21.1	551	46.2	2,065	71.9	20,870	11.6	2,423	45.4	18,447	71.4
Black	511	55.7	285	23.9	227	7.9	5,100	33.9	1,730	32.4	3,371	13.0
Asian and Pacific Islander	226	21.4	48	4.1	178	6.2	1,350	10.0	136	2.5	1,215	4.7
Hispanic (any race)	704	43.0	303	25.3	401	14.0	3,762	26.2	986	18.5	2,776	10.7
Nativity Status												
Native ⁴	3,280	29.5	969	81.2	2,311	80.5	26,379	17.1	4,503	84.4	21,876	84.7
Foreign born	786	28.6	225	18.8	561	19.5	4,795	17.3	831	15.6	3,964	15.3
Naturalized citizen	205	16.1	33	2.8	172	6.0	1,558	11.6	180	3.4	1,377	5.3
Not a citizen	581	33.0	192	16.1	389	13.5	3,237	20.1	650	12.2	2,587	10.0
Labor Force Status												
Had a job during last 4 months	2,282	20.3	464	38.8	1,818	63.3	23,474	13.1	3,069	57.5	20,405	79.0
No job last 4 months ⁵	1,784	40.9	730	61.2	1,054	36.7	7,701	29.4	2,265	42.5	5,436	21.0
Unable to find work	28	(B)	21	1.8	7	0.3	261	58.9	154	2.9	107	0.4
Not able to work due to disability	33	(B)	29	2.4	4	0.1	754	70.6	532	10.0	222	0.9
Educational Attainment												
Not a high school graduate	749	60.0	449	37.6	300	10.4	4,684	38.9	1,823	34.2	2,860	11.1
High school graduate	1,080	39.8	430	36.0	650	22.6	10,089	19.2	1,940	36.4	8,149	31.5
College, 1 or more years	2,237	14.1	315	26.4	1,923	66.9	16,402	9.6	1,570	29.4	14,832	57.4
Job Training												
Received job training in past 12 months	167	(B)	81	6.8	86	3.0	1,420	28.8	409	7.7	1,010	3.9
Sponsored by the government	55	(B)	47	4.0	8	0.3	407	65.4	266	5.0	141	0.5
Monthly Family Income⁶												
Less than \$500	201	73.1	147	13.6	54	1.9	1,013	57.5	582	11.5	431	1.7
\$500 to \$1,499	595	57.3	341	31.7	254	9.0	4,246	50.9	2,160	42.6	2,085	8.2
\$1,500 and over	3,094	19.1	590	54.7	2,504	89.1	25,303	9.2	2,328	45.9	22,975	90.1
\$1,500 to \$2,499	617	42.2	261	24.2	356	12.7	4,759	21.8	1,039	20.5	3,720	14.6
\$2,500 to \$3,999	746	23.2	173	16.1	573	20.4	6,561	11.0	721	14.2	5,840	22.9
\$4,000 and over	1,730	9.0	156	14.4	1,575	56.0	13,983	4.1	567	11.2	13,416	52.6
Child Support⁷												
Received payments	196	53.9	106	15.5	90	22.8	3,888	24.3	945	32.9	2,943	46.6
Did not receive payments	881	65.3	575	84.5	305	77.2	5,304	36.3	1,926	67.1	3,378	53.4
Poverty Level⁶												
Below poverty level	760	66.6	506	46.9	254	9.0	4,534	55.8	2,529	49.9	2,005	7.9
100 to 199 percent of poverty level	892	40.3	359	33.3	533	18.9	6,763	24.1	1,628	32.1	5,135	20.1
200 percent of poverty level or higher	2,238	9.5	213	19.8	2,025	72.0	19,265	4.7	914	18.0	18,351	72.0
Type of Residence												
Metropolitan	3,302	25.7	850	71.2	2,452	85.4	24,776	16.0	3,957	74.2	20,819	80.6
In central city	1,132	37.3	423	35.4	709	24.7	8,507	25.6	2,180	40.9	6,328	24.5
Not in central city	2,170	19.7	427	35.8	1,743	60.7	16,269	10.9	1,778	33.3	14,491	56.1
Nonmetropolitan	763	45.1	344	28.8	419	14.6	6,399	21.5	1,376	25.8	5,023	19.4

(B) Derived measure not shown when base is less than 200,000.

¹ Percent of mothers participating in or covered by one or more programs.

² Currently participating in or covered by one or more programs.

³ Not currently participating in any program.

⁴ Includes people born in U.S. outlying areas and abroad to parents who are U.S. citizens.

⁵ Includes people not in the labor force.

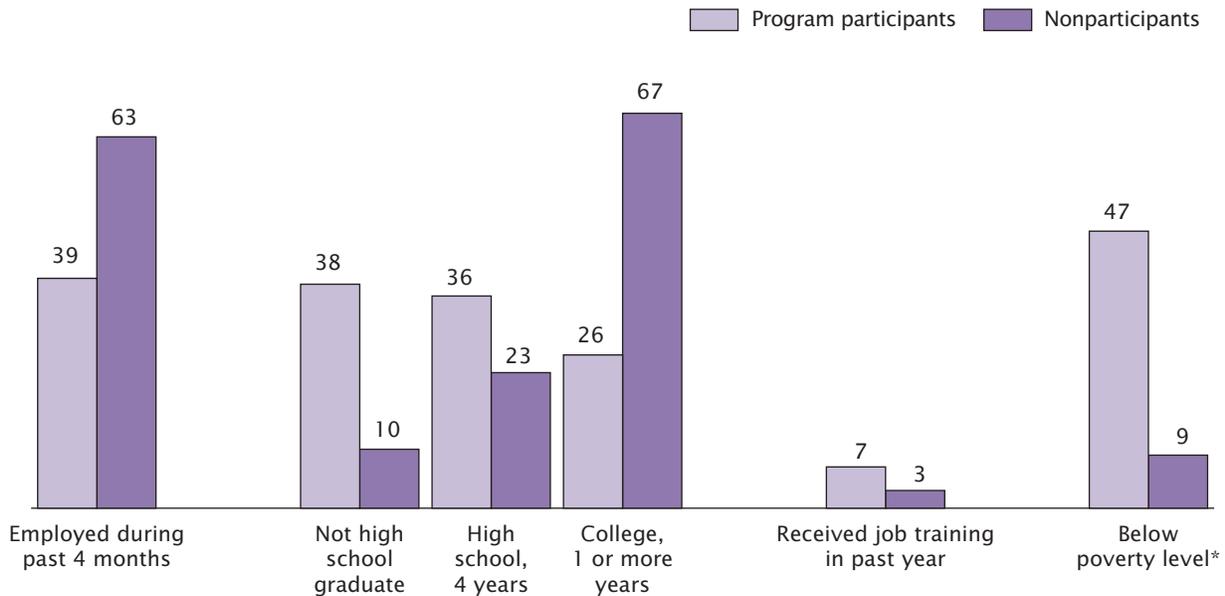
⁶ Percent distribution based only on families reporting income in the past 4 months. Average income for 4 months prior to the interview date.

⁷ Data shown only for mothers whose children are under 21 years and whose marital status is other than married spouse present, unless the spouse is a stepparent. Percent distribution based on this specified universe of mothers.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Wave 2, 2001.

Figure 4.
Selected Employment, Educational, and Economic Characteristics of Mothers Who Had a Child in the Last Year by Program Participation: 2001

(Percent with selected characteristics)



*Based only on families reporting income in the past 4 months.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Wave 2, 2001.

mothers without a birth in the last year for each of these population groups, with non-Hispanic White and Asian and Pacific Islander mothers recording lower participation rates than Black or Hispanic mothers.¹⁷

Nativity

Sixteen percent (1.1 million) of mothers receiving assistance were foreign born. For mothers with a birth in the last year, the participation rates were not statistically different for foreign-born and native mothers—29 percent and 30 percent, respectively. Among the foreign-born population, naturalized mothers with a birth in the last year had a lower participation rate (16 percent) than mothers who

¹⁷ Participation rates for non-Hispanic White mothers and Asian and Pacific Islander mothers either with a child in the last year or without a child in the last year were not statistically different.

were not citizens (33 percent). Mothers who were naturalized citizens were older than foreign-born mothers who were not citizens, and thus may have more economic resources that affect their program participation levels.¹⁸

For mothers without a recent birth, a similar pattern exists; there was no statistical difference in participation rates between native and foreign-born mothers, while participation rates were almost twice as high for noncitizens (20 percent) as naturalized citizens (12 percent).

¹⁸ In 2001, 56 percent of naturalized participant mothers were aged 35 to 44, compared with 36 percent of noncitizen participant mothers. For nonparticipants, 67 percent of naturalized mothers were aged 35 to 44, compared with 42 percent of noncitizen mothers. Also, participation rates of mothers who were naturalized citizens with a child born in the last year were not statistically different from those of mothers without recent births.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMIC STATUS

Families usually obtain their economic support from various sources. These sources can include earnings of family members, child support, public assistance, and other sources such as help from relatives and friends. In general, mothers receiving program assistance had lower family incomes, lower levels of labor force participation, and less education than nonparticipant mothers. The younger age of the program participants may account for some of the socioeconomic differences by program status.

Labor force

In 2001, the majority of mothers had a job in the last 4 months. The proportion was 56 percent for

mothers with a birth in the last year and 75 percent for other mothers.

Mothers who had not worked in the last 4 months were about twice as likely as mothers who had worked in the last 4 months to be receiving some form of assistance: 41 percent compared with 21 percent for mothers with a recent birth, and 29 percent compared with 13 percent for mothers without a recent birth.

For participant mothers with a birth in the last year, 39 percent were working compared with 63 percent of their nonparticipant counterparts (Figure 4). The proportions working were higher for mothers without recent births (58 percent for participants and 79 percent for nonparticipants).

Education and job training

Figure 4 shows that in 2001, 38 percent of participant mothers with a birth in the last year had not completed high school, compared with 10 percent of nonparticipant mothers. In contrast, 26 percent of mothers with a birth in the last year who were program participants had completed 1 or more years of college, compared with 67 percent for nonparticipants.

Among recent mothers, 7 percent of participant mothers and 3 percent of nonparticipants had received job training in the 12 months preceding their interview in 2001. Among mothers who had not given birth in the last year, 8 percent of participants and 4 percent of nonparticipants received job training.¹⁹

¹⁹ When looking at mothers receiving job training, the difference between participant mothers with a recent birth and those without a recent birth was not statistically significant. The same was true for nonparticipant mothers.

Income, poverty, and child support

Since qualifying for assistance is income-based, the participation rates were higher for the lowest income levels regardless of whether the mother had a child in the last year.²⁰ Among program participants who were recent mothers in families with reports of income in the 4-month period prior to the survey, 55 percent had average monthly incomes of \$1,500 or more. The corresponding percentage for participant mothers without a recent birth was 46 percent. Among mothers not participating in any program, 9 out of 10 mothers were living in families whose monthly income was \$1,500 or more, regardless of when they had their last birth.

While about one-half of mothers who participated in assistance programs were living in poverty, regardless of when they had their last birth, program assistance was not limited to families in poverty. About 1 in 6 participating mothers lived in a family whose income was 200 percent of the poverty level or higher (Table 4).

Economic support from fathers is another potential source of income that the SIPP asks about for mothers who were not married or living with a spouse and for currently married women receiving child support from their ex-husband or the child's biological father. For participant mothers with a birth in the last year, 85 percent did not receive any payments, compared with 67 percent of participant mothers who did not have a child in the last year (Table 4). Among nonparticipants, 77 percent of

²⁰ For mothers with monthly family income of \$500 to \$1,499, there was no statistical difference in the participation rates of mothers with recent births and mothers without births in the last year.

recent mothers and 53 percent of mothers without a recent birth did not receive child support payments. For mothers with a birth in the last year who did not receive child support payments, the difference between participants and nonparticipants was not statistically significant.

SUMMARY

This report examined participation in selected public assistance programs for mothers with and without a birth in the last year. It also looked at differences between participants and nonparticipants. Of the 35.2 million mothers 15 to 44 years old in 2001, 6.5 million (19 percent) were participants in either TANF, food stamps, WIC, Medicaid, housing assistance, or other assistance. Half of mothers (regardless of whether they had a birth in the last year) participating in any of these assistance programs were enrolled in two or more programs. Twenty-nine percent of the 4 million mothers with a birth in the last year were participants. Over half (56 percent) of participant mothers with a child in the last year were unmarried.

Overall program participation fell between 1996 and 2001 from 42 percent to 29 percent for mothers with a recent birth and from 22 percent to 17 percent for all other mothers. Participation rates also declined for both married and unmarried mothers, regardless of when they had their last birth.

Among participant mothers with a recent birth, 40 percent lived with their spouse. Two in 10 participant mothers with a recent birth lived without another adult present in the household. For teen mothers with a birth in the last year, 63 percent received benefits, as did one-half (51 percent) of teen mothers without a recent birth.

Program participants in 2001 were racially and ethnically diverse. Among Black mothers, 36 percent were program participants. Among Hispanic mothers, the rate was 29 percent, and among non-Hispanic White mothers, it was 13 percent. Overall, 16 percent of mothers receiving assistance were foreign born.

Participant mothers with a birth in the last year were more likely not to have completed high school, to be living below the poverty level, and to have received job training than were their nonparticipant counterparts. Participant mothers with infants were also less likely to have been employed in the last 4 months.

SOURCE OF DATA

The population represented (the population universe) in the 2001 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in the United States. The SIPP is a longitudinal survey conducted at 4-month intervals. The data in this report were collected from June through September 2001 in the second wave (interview) of the 2001 SIPP. The data highlighted in this report come primarily from the core and the fertility history topical modules. Although the main focus of the SIPP is information on labor force participation, jobs, income, and participation in federal assistance programs, information on other topics is also collected in topical modules on a rotating basis. For the 2001 SIPP panel, approximately 50,500 housing units were in sample for Wave 1. Of the 40,500 eligible units, 35,100 were interviewed. In Wave 2, a 13-percent sample cut was implemented.

In Wave 2, about 28,100 interviews were obtained from the 30,500 eligible units. The institutionalized population, which is excluded from the population universe, is composed primarily of the population in correctional institutions and nursing homes (91 percent of the 4.1 million institutionalized people in Census 2000).

ACCURACY OF THE ESTIMATES

Statistics from surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless otherwise noted. This means the 90-percent confidence interval for the difference between the estimates being compared does not include zero. Nonsampling errors in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the survey is designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately the answers are coded and classified. The U.S. Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process, including the overall design of surveys, the wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and the statistical review of reports, to minimize these errors.

The Survey of Income and Program Participation weighting procedure uses ratio estimation, whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but biases may still be present when

people who are missed by the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. How this weighting procedure affects other variables in the survey is not precisely known. All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources.

For further information on statistical standards and the computation and use of standard errors, go to www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A2_SIPP2001_w1tow9_20050214.pdf or contact David Hall of the Census Bureau's Demographic Statistical Methods Division at david.warren.hall@census.gov.

Additional information on the SIPP can be found at the following Web sites:

www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/
(main SIPP Web site),

www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/workpapr/wp230.pdf
(SIPP Quality Profile), and

www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/usrguide/sipp2001.pdf
(SIPP Users' Guide).

MORE INFORMATION

The report as well as five additional detailed tables are available on the Internet www.census.gov; search for this report by clicking on the word "People" on the Web page and selecting "Fertility."

CONTACTS

For additional information on fertility and program participation, contact the author of this report in the Fertility and Family Statistics Branch at 301-763-2416, or by e-mail at Terry.A.Lugaila@census.gov.

USER COMMENTS

The Census Bureau welcomes the comments and advice of data and report users. If you have any suggestions or comments, please write to:

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